

# Student Scholarship Internship Opportunity (SSIO) Online System Instructions

Undergraduate internship opportunity submissions are for the exclusive use of Hollings scholars to select summer internships. They will access the database and contact potential mentors between early October through March 31.

The nine-week summer internship begins in May (the Tuesday following the Memorial Day holiday) for semester system scholars; quarter system scholars are approved to begin the summer internship by mid-June.

The interns are not considered to be performing work or a job, rendering advisory or personal services, or providing expert advice. There is no commitment to future employment by the host organization or NOAA. Scholars are participating in the NOAA Undergraduate Scholarship Programs primarily for the experience and educational benefits they derive from conducting research in the NOAA mission sciences.

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The following section contains information about mentoring and submitting an opportunity to SSIO. **For more information, please view our [webpage for mentors](#).** For any remaining questions, contact [studentscholarshipprograms@noaa.gov](mailto:studentscholarshipprograms@noaa.gov)

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## SSIO instructions at-a-glance: entering an opportunity and selecting a scholar.

*If you have not mentored a Hollings scholar before, please review the information in the following sections before entering an opportunity.*

- **Form a [distinct project](#) that is substantive**, with hypotheses or objectives and planned outcomes that can be reasonably accomplished within 9 weeks. It must be directly related to the NOAA-mission critical science, management, and policy.
- **[Enter it in SSIO](#)**. Only federal employees can enter projects. If you are not a federal employee, view "[Who can enter opportunities into the SSIO database?](#)" below.
- **The program will review and approve** (or disapprove with comments for resubmission) within 2 business days.
- **Starting in early October and through late March, interested scholars will reach out.** [You will then interview the scholar\(s\) and select a scholar.](#)
  - **We highly recommend interviewing multiple scholars and waiting until two weeks after the database opens to scholars (October 17) to select a scholar.**
- **You will work with the scholar to decide on a time for a [site visit](#).** The site visit arrangements are made through the scholarship program and paid by the scholarship.
- **The scholar will begin their internship in late May or June 2026.**

## Timeline for mentoring a scholar in 2026

*For an accessible version of this table, view our [webpage for mentors](#)*

Date	Event
September 2, 2025	Mentors begin submitting internship opportunities.
November 15, 2025	Scholars access the internship database and begin reaching out to mentors.

Date	Event
Fall 2025 through March 31, 2026	Mentors interview and select scholars; selected scholars schedule and conduct site visits.; selected scholars schedule and conduct site visits.
May 26, 2026	Most scholars begin their internships.
Mid-June 2026	Quarter system scholars begin internship
July 27, 2026	Science and Education Symposium (required for all scholars).
Aug 1, 2026	Most scholars return home. Quarter system scholars finish the last week(s) of their internships.
Aug 29, 2026	All internships have concluded.

## Who can mentor Hollings scholars?

Mentors must be NOAA employees with a professional science, management, or policy background. Co-mentors may be non-NOAA employees who work at the project facility, and must also have the appropriate background. They may participate and even lead the scholar's project under the endorsement and guidance of a NOAA federal employee.

*Note that only federal employees can enter the opportunity into SSIO. Please see the question below for more information on submission requirements.*

## Who can enter opportunities into the SSIO database?

**Federal employees who meet the mentor criteria above** may submit an internship opportunity. If you are a NOAA-affiliated employee or NOAA partner at a NOAA facility who is interested in mentoring a scholar, collaborate with a NOAA federal employee who can submit the opportunity. Please reach out to [studentscholarshipprograms@noaa.gov](mailto:studentscholarshipprograms@noaa.gov) if you have trouble finding a federal employee to act as primary mentor on record.

**The NOAA federal employee must submit the project to SSIO even if they will not be the primary/lead mentor.** The NOAA employee must ensure that the project supports NOAA mission critical sciences.

Sometimes scholars reach out to potential mentors who have not posted an opportunity. If this happens and you are a NOAA employee with the appropriate background, you may follow the guidance in How to submit an internship opportunity. Once approved, the scholar can select the opportunity.

## What are the requirements for an internship submission?

The summer internship project, must be:

- Substantive, with hypotheses or objectives and planned outcomes that can be reasonably accomplished within 9 weeks. *It is the responsibility of the mentor and scholar to identify a project that can realistically be completed within the time frame.*
- A distinct project, but may contribute to a larger research project, educational program, or outreach/communication effort. The internship should not be a series of small projects and/or tasks.
- Directly related to the NOAA-mission critical science, management, and policy.

When you are submitting the internship:

- **Be sure to fill all fields in internship information.**
  - The “**Estimated start - end date**” should be: May 2026 - August 2026
  - Make sure to select the NOAA long-term goal or enterprise objective from the drop down box that your summer project is associated with
- **Internship travel information:** NO ENTRY REQUIRED
- **Mentors contact information:** Completely fill out.

## How do I submit an internship and what are the steps?

1. A NOAA employee enters the internship into SSIO.
2. Within two-three business days, the Hollings program will review the opportunity.
3. Once approved or disapproved, you will automatically receive an email from [StudentScholarshipPrograms@noaa.gov](mailto:StudentScholarshipPrograms@noaa.gov) indicating the status.
  - a. If the internship opportunity is “disapproved,” there will be comments indicating necessary changes before resubmission and approval.

Sometimes scholars reach out to potential mentors who have not posted an opportunity. If this happens and you are a NOAA employee with the appropriate background, you may submit an opportunity. Once approved, the scholar can select the opportunity.

## What is the selection process once an internship is submitted?

The selection process for most scholars takes place between October and January, but scholars may secure internships October 1 through March 31.

1. **Scholar inquiries:** Scholars will explore internships in the SSIO system starting the first week of October. They will contact mentors to express their interest in an internship.
2. **Interviews:** Conduct an interview of interested scholars. We encourage mentors to interview more than one scholar and scholars to contact more than one mentor. Please

advise scholars if you are interviewing multiple scholars. **We highly recommend waiting until two weeks after the database opens (October 17) before selecting a scholar to give multiple scholars time to reach out.**

- a. The primary purpose of the interview is for you to see if the scholar is an appropriate match for your opportunity based on their current skill set and interests, and whether they are a good fit in your team. We also encourage mentors to mention factors that impact the scholar's experience. This may include:
  - i. How often you are in office versus working remotely or in the field.
  - ii. If you anticipate having a week or more of leave during the internship, who will mentor them in your absence?
  - iii. How much time they can expect to spend in the lab or field versus on a computer.
  - iv. Whether there are opportunities for them to network with peers and/or your colleagues.
  - v. The cost of living in the surrounding area.
  - vi. How difficult it is to access the site (Do they need a car? Is there public transportation?). Note, the program does not pay for scholars to rent cars and they may not drive government vehicles.
3. **Selection:** Once you have selected a scholar, email them offering them the internship. If they accept, they should contact the program, with a CC to you to let us know about the match. The scholarship programs staff will review the selection and e-mail the mentor and the student with approval or disapproval within two business days of submission.
4. **Site visit:** Once approved, the scholar should coordinate with you to determine a time for their site visit to the NOAA facility. Once the time is agreed upon, they will send us a travel request. Funding for the site visit (up to three days and two nights) is included in the student's award. The scholar must send you their CV before the site visit.

Note that many scholars secure their internship by the end of November or early December in order to conduct a site visit to the NOAA facility hosting them during their winter academic break.

## What are the mentor's roles and responsibilities?

**Mentors are recommended to complete Mentor Training** if they have not done so within the past two years. The program recommends "Cultivating Mentor Relationships" in the Commerce Learning Center.

**The host office must provide the scholar with:** a workspace, computer, internet access, printer, and telephone.

**The mentor and host office must ensure that the scholar has access to the building.** If your facility requires a Personal Identity Verification card (PIV) to access, the mentor must arrange for the scholar to obtain a PIV. The Office of Education facilitates a Special Agreement Check (SAC) for scholars, which includes fingerprinting and a criminal background check. As part of the SAC, we send ID cards to the scholars (these are not Common Access Cards (CACs) or PIVs).

**During the internship period:**

- The mentor is responsible for providing day-to-day guidance and guidance on technology, science, outreach, policy, operations, education, and research activities.
- During the first two weeks of the summer internship, students and mentors are required to discuss and complete and sign a [Project Plan](#) and send it to the program.
- Mentors must sign a time reporting record, which is filled out by the scholar, every two weeks.
- During the fourth week of the internship, NOAA mentors are required to conduct a mid-term assessment and provide constructive feedback to the scholar and the Office of Education (online survey).
- Mentors must support the scholar's presentation at the Science and Education Symposium.
- NOAA mentors are required to complete a final evaluation (online survey) at the end of the summer internship.
- Scholars may not drive government vehicles.

**After the internship period,** the programs encourage mentors to continue interacting with their scholars to provide professional and academic guidance.

## What does the site visit entail and how is it arranged?

The site visit provides the student with the opportunity to meet with the NOAA mentor and other staff, discuss the project in greater detail, explore housing options, and assess the local transportation requirements. Scholars are permitted three days and two nights for the site visit.

The scholar is required to complete and submit a Travel Request Form to their program to request travel for the site visit. **The Office of Education makes all travel arrangements** through the support contractor. The scholar and mentor should **not** purchase airline, bus, or train tickets. Tickets purchased outside the approved process will not be reimbursed.

Scholars will only be permitted **one** site visit. All site visits must be approved and scheduled by March 31. Travel to the NOAA internship site must be completed by mid-April. The program recommends the scholar travel during the winter or spring semester break to an approved NOAA site to finalize their summer internship.

## What is the Science and Education Symposium?

All scholars must present an oral or poster presentation of their summer project at NOAA Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland for the Science and Education Symposium. For most scholars, this will be the 10th week of their internship, as it always occurs nine weeks after Memorial Day holiday, when most scholars start.

Scholars may choose to deliver a 15 minute oral presentation or a poster presentation. They will also choose the NOAA goal area that most closely aligns with the subject of their presentation so that presentations on related topics grouped together in the same session.

Students who began their internships at least two weeks later than the last week of May will return to their NOAA facility to complete their internship pending the availability of funds; otherwise they can complete it virtually. Students who only have one internship week left to complete after Symposium will conduct that week virtually.

Guidance for the symposium and oral/poster presentations will be provided to scholars and mentors at the start of the summer internship.

## Can the NOAA mentor attend the Science and Education Symposium? Will the Office of Education pay for the NOAA mentor's travel?

NOAA mentors are encouraged to attend the final presentations both to support their scholar as well as to assist with the judging process. However, the Office of Education cannot provide any travel support to Silver Spring, Maryland, for the mentor to attend the symposium. Virtual attendance is possible.

## Is there a cost associated with mentoring a scholar?

Their stipend is part of their scholarship award package, as is their initial travel to the internship location and back home.

Any costs associated with providing necessary equipment and supplies, local travel required by the internship, or other costs related to the internship project are the responsibility of the host office.

## Can I mentor more than one scholar?

Yes, but each scholar must have a distinct project. They may not share a NOAA project.

## Can I assign more than one project to a scholar?

No. Each scholar must have one project that they can complete within nine weeks.

## What are scholar's roles and responsibilities?

In addition to completing their internship project during their summer internship period, scholars must:

- Be at the host facility during normal, or agreed upon working hours, and actively working on their project.
  - Scholars may telework as agreed upon with the mentor, but we encourage scholars to be in office as much as is reasonable,
- Observe and conform to all applicable rules, regulations, and requirements of the facility including, but not limited to, those respecting environment, safety, and health (ES&H) and ES&H training requirements, security, operating and health physics procedures, drug free workplace notification requirements, and conduct.
- Meet regularly with their mentor.
- For a more detailed list of scholar requirements, view the [internship section of their student manual](#).

The 10th week is spent at NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, at the end of the summer where scholars are required to present the results of their summer internship project to NOAA and other scholarship recipients. Mentors are welcome to attend or participate virtually.

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## Student Scholarship Program Objectives

The NOAA Hollings and EPP Undergraduate Scholarship Programs are designed to meet the following objectives.

1. The NOAA Hollings and EPP Undergraduate Scholarship Programs will enhance the pipeline of high quality, diverse students in fields of science, engineering, mathematics, and technology for the future U.S. workforce. The program will strongly recruit high quality students from throughout the United States, from all types and sizes of colleges and universities including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and other Minority Serving Institutions; and from the broad range of race/ethnicity groups.
2. More specifically, the NOAA Undergraduate Scholarship Programs will enhance the number and diversity of students who graduate with degrees and experience in NOAA mission critical sciences. The program will provide opportunities for the scholars to:



become familiar with NOAA's various offices and sites; become familiar with NOAA scientific and technological programs; enhance their professional development in science, mathematics and engineering areas related to NOAA's mission; continue their education in their NOAA-related field of study; and become trained as scientists, engineers, and other technical personnel for potential employment in fields related to NOAA's mission critical sciences and goals. A unique aspect of this program is that it will challenge the students to expand beyond the broad academic foundation provided by their institution and focus on research or operational issues consistent with NOAA's mission.

3. The NOAA Undergraduate Scholarship Programs will also promote interactions between NOAA and the academic community. These interactions will link NOAA's scientific and technological capabilities to those in the academic community and enhance the educational base for NOAA mission critical fields of study. By supporting scholars in this program, NOAA will increase the number of undergraduate students actively engaged in NOAA mission critical science areas of study which will enhance the educational programs in these areas offered by academic institutions. After the summer internship(s), when the scholars return to campus, their interactions with faculty and other students will help transfer knowledge and technology from NOAA to the academic community. This will support the national capability in, and commitment to, educational programs related to NOAA's mission critical sciences.